Mr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi vs. Ali Sina Part 14

Dr. Javed Ahmad Ghamidi and Dr. Khalid Zaheer vs. Ali Sina

Part VIII

Dear Mr Ali Sina

I have divided this response of mine to your message number six (dated December 4, 2006) into five parts. The first part will briefly let you know my views on some of the objections you have raised in your last message to the contents of some of my earlier messages. The second one talks of the basic problem which, in my opinion, has caused you to not be able to understand the message of Islam properly. The third part informs you about what my approach has been in understanding and accepting Islam. In this part I will respond to your objection that my entry to Islam was on emotional grounds. The fourth part responds to your real objections on the prophet of Islam which although you have never failed to mention, they were, for some queer reason, not formally put on the table for discussion. I am doing that job myself now.

1) You have raised objections to two points I raised in my earlier responses: You believe that the Qur'anic concept of intercession doesn't make sense to you because if intercession was not going to be accepted then there was no point for it to be allowed at all. And if it was to be allowed, there was again no point in doing so when there was no possibility of it adding anything to God's knowledge. Moreover, you believe the concept of intercession is pointless because the one interceding cannot do in mercy better than God. Let me say that you have missed the point again. Prayers for others in this world are an expression of one's sympathy for others mentioned before the Almighty. It is for God to decide whether those prayers are to be responded to positively or not. However, if they are not going to be heard, they are still worthwhile in that they allow our sincerest emotions to be expressed in favour of our dear ones. Without sincere prayers for others, this world would have lost an extremely sublime aspect of humaneness and sympathy. The prayers in the hereafter, in the form of intercession, shall be allowed only to a few privileged people (privileged on account of their good performance in this world) and such prayers are going to be heard, because God Almighty would allow in the hereafter, unlike in this world, only those prayers to be expressed that are going to see the light of the day.

Dear Dr. Ghamidi and Dr. Zaheer.

Thank you for your response. On the subject of intercession we seem to be going in circles. The way you explained my argument on intercession shows that you clearly understand the problem I am posing. However you seem to avoid the question altogether and instead you talk about how important it is for us humans to pray for each other and care for one another. That is an entirely different subject. It has nothing to do with the contradition of which we are

talking about. The problem is simple to understand. It just has no answer. To be fair you must admit that on this subject Muhammad has goofed.

If the intercession is going to be accepted, it means that God will change his decision upon the request of his creatures. This means that his original decision was not as good as those suggested by his creatures. If on the other hand his decision is not going to change then the whole concept of intercession is farce. It is actually a cruel joke to tell people to pray for one another when those prayers will have zero effect, because the decision is already made. If the decision of God is already made and everything is predetermined, then our fates are already established even before we came to this world. Intercession means pleading with God to change his decision. Perhaps we should also talk about the concept of predestination, which is related to this subject and is another gross fallacy of Islam. We will talk about that in another time if we ever get beyond these three points.

> The other objection was on the beginning part of the second chapter of the Qur'an. As I mentioned earlier, the beginning letters (Alif Lam Mim) constitute the name of the chapter (surah) and the later sentence refers to it to inform that the chapter is a part of the book of God that was prophesied in the scriptures of the people of the book (Jews and Christians). The statement goes on to claim that there was no doubt about the truthfulness of this fact. You object to this claim on this plea: If there wasn't any doubt about it, why didn't many people accept it? You have raised a similar objection on the claim I made about the meanings of the first few statements in the said chapter. Let me clarify that when a statement is made that there was no doubt about what was mentioned, it only promises that the truthfulness of the claim in the statement would be unfolded to the people who would satisfy the conditions of understanding it. If a teacher of mathematics solves a question on the board before a group of students and claims that what he had done was absolutely clear, his claim cannot be refuted on the basis of the fact that a few students couldn't follow it. It needs to be seen as to what caused those students to not have been able to understand the answer when others like them were able to grasp it. If you and many others are claiming that they have not been able understand the fact that the Qur'an is the book of God despite your best efforts and therefore the claim is faulty, I would respond by telling you that I have tried to understand it on my part and I have been able to fully appreciate the veracity of its claim. So it's my claim against yours. To me there must be something wrong in your claim because it has worked perfectly well in my case. I will not accuse you of not doing well enough to understand it, but I will be quietly confident that the claim of the Qur'an is correct because my experience, as indeed the experience of hundreds and thousands of others, is clearly supporting it. Should I believe in what you are saying or have confidence in what I myself have experienced?

Facts are not subjective. 2+2=4 and the Earth revolves around the Sun even if you and I may think differently. So the argument of "your word against my word" is not a valid one when it comes to logical and scientific facts. Your word against mine is a valid argument only when we are asked to relay an event that we both have witnessed and there is no other way to know what happened except though our words. You claim that the Quran is the word of

God. The fact that you strongly believe is not proof for others. There are people who strongly believe in faiths that both you and I know are false. The message of God must be clear and unequivocal. There should be no doubt in it and it must be easy to understand. If the eternal fate of mankind depend on it then it must be clear. If it is not clear then God is unjust. He can't punish humans for disbelieving in things that he has failed to explain clearly.

You say that the Quran is clear and the problem is with my understanding. That is why we are having this debate. I am asking questions and you are trying to explain. So far you have failed to explain convincingly the questions that I have asked. Therefore, I am justified to doubt while I see no justification for your faith. Unless you prove that the Quran is logical your faith is not based on facts.

Alif Lam Mim and other intermittent letters at the beginning of some of the suras are not the names of those suras. Each sura has its own name. If I tell you verse 3 in sura Alif Lam Mim, you won't be able to find it because these letters appear at the beginning of suras 2, 3, 29, 30, 31 and 32. Therefore clearly you are wrong. Alif Lam Mim can't be the name of six suras.

Sura 7 starts with Alif Lam Mim Sad

Sura 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 start with Alif Lam Re

Sura 13 starts with Alif Lam Mim Re

Sura 19 starts with Ke Ha Ein Sad

Sura 20 stats with Ta Ha and Ta Ha is also the name of this sura.

Sura 26 and 28 start with Ta Sin Mim

Sura 27 starts with Ta Sin

Sura 36 stats with Ya Sin and it is also the name of the sura

Sura 38 starts with Sad

Sura 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46 start with Khe Mim

Sura 50 starts with Qaf and it is also the name of the sura

Sura 68 starts with Noon

As you can see there are 28 suras that start with these letters. Only three of them are named the same as the letters with which they start. All other suras have other names. Some of the suras share the same letters. The rest of the Quranic suras have no such letters. You say these letters are the names of the suras. I am showing you that they are not. Not only you don't know what these letters are, no one knows. This belies the claim that the Quran is clear.

This is the trap of Islam. You constantly are trying to explain the unexplainable and the illogical. This is impossible. All you have to do is admit that the Quran is wrong.

> 2) Now I'll tell you what has been the basic problem in your approach. Your problem in understanding Islam has been that you want to see Islam the way you think Islam should have been if it was the religion of God. I think this is not an academic approach. What it causes to happen is that when you find the message of Islam not conforming to your standards, you reject it, claiming it to be false because it falls short of your self-created standards. Now while there may not be anything wrong with your standards, you will have to face up to the reality that Islam never claimed to be your brainchild. Islam claims to be God's message that has come to enlighten peoples of all times to come. The only way of understanding it therefore is to understand it the way it is in an unemotional way, without attaching any strings to the process of your understanding. Having done that objectively, you then have a right to criticize it if it falls short of the standards of intellectual scrutiny. The investigation thus should not make an attempt to ascertain whether the teachings of Islam are in accordance with your taste of the ideal or not. It should be evaluated on the basis of its own claims and standards. Of course, you have a right to question those standards too, but your questioning should be based on broader universal principles rather than the principles of your own age or philosophical leanings. Your standards are the standards of one mortal human or those of humans of just one era. The universal religion of God must satisfy the condition that it should appear to be the message of God right from day one for all times to come. Such a message must go through the process of gradually uplifting the standards of nations it directly came into contact with. It should never lose sight of the ground realities of the immediate addressees of the message. While doing so, however, it should never compromise on the universal ideals of morality.
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> Your persistent insistence, for example, that the understanding of intercession given in the Qur'an is unacceptable betrays that you claim that it is incorrect simply because you believe that had you been God you wouldn't have allowed things to happen the way they have been suggested in the Qur'an. What I am humbly suggesting to you is that you assume for the time being that you are trying to understand the message of a God who is somebody other than you and He has decided that a few people should be allowed to speak on behalf of some other people. Having understood that concept, you then have a right to say that the methodology suggested is unfair or is senseless. I would like to hear that claim from you if that is what you believe after you have fully understood the idea, keeping in mind the assumption that there could be a God more sympathetic, wise, knowledgeable, and fair than you are. I have a strong feeling that your mind is not allowed the privilege to fully grasp the Qur'anic concept of intercession because your own ideal of how a fair trial of accountability should take place makes a preemptive strike at that concept to stop it from reaching the receptive side of your mind. That, to me, is the biggest hurdle in your way to understanding the different aspects of the message of Islam.

Let me see if I understand what you are saying. You want me to accept the Quran first as the message of God and then conform to it agreeing that since I am a mortal human with limited understanding I should not judge the wisdom of God that is superior to mine but rather try to persuade myself that he knows best and submit blindly. Since I come from where you stand let me even give you a hand and make an example that I used to make during my years of

pre-enlightenment of faithfulness. Let us say you are sick and you go to a doctor. He may prescribe some medicine that may not be agreeable to you. However, you still trust his knowledge and take the medicine because you know that he knows what you don't. This is the gist of your argument. You say that it is not up to us humans to judge the divine prescription that is for all times with the standard of our time, which is only a fraction of it.

Here is where the biggest fallacy lies. You put the cart in front of the horse. You start with the assumption that the Quran is the message of God and then try to make sense of it. The problem is that once you accept the Quran as the word of God, there is nothing left to question. Yes I would trust the doctor and will follow his recommendations even if they make no sense to me. However, before doing that I would certainly make sure that he is qualified as a doctor. It would be foolhardy to blindly follow the instructions of someone who claims to be a doctor without checking his credentials. I must make sure that he is licensed before and only then follow his prescriptions. Likewise it would be foolish to accept anyone who claims to be a messenger of God before checking his credentials. Before accepting the Quran as a prescription from God and following it blindly, we must make sure that Muhammad was indeed a real messenger of God and not a conman charlatan.

Furthermore, even if I may not understand some of my doctor's recommendations, nothing stops me asking and understanding them. I can research and find everything about my sickness and how to get the cure. I do not have to have blind faith, even in my doctor. Everything is there for me to understand.

You say that Muhammad was the messenger of God. Where is his credential? There are countless psychopaths and charlatans who claim to be messengers of God. David Koresh, Jim Jones, the Japanese Shoko Asahara, the Korean Sun Myung Moon, and even Charles Manson, all claimed to be humanity's saviors, messiahs, and many followed them. In many cases the result was devastating. Those who followed these mentally sick men did exactly what you say. They believed first and tried hard to dismiss their doubts.

It is amazing that you call blind faith "objective". What part of your belief in Islam is objective? You say the message of God should not be judged based on the criteria of right and wrong of our time because it is for all times. Isn't this a fallacy? If a message does not conform to the moral and logical standards of our time, it is not for our time. Isn't our time part of the time continuum?

Are you saying that sometimes in future peoples' standards will change and then they will have no problem with the Quran? If that is true, let us shelf the Quran and wait until such time arrives. It is unfair of God to send a message to us when it makes no sense to us and it goes against our commonsense and our morality. God gave us intelligence; he most likely wanted us to use it. What sense it makes to give us intelligence and then tell us to disregard it when it comes to accepting His word? How can we then distinguish His message from those of thousands other charlatans and swindlers? They all demand blind faith while they have no proof. And you are telling me that God also has no proof?

Baha’u’llah, the founder of the Bahai Faith explained this concept of blind faith that is demanded virtually by all religions, very eloquently. He wrote: “Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; deaf thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge” Then he clarifies: “Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; deaf thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness.”

If this is the standard then all beliefs are acceptable. This is brainwashing and an affront to human intelligence. It is prescription to blind faith. The values of things are established by comparing them with their likes. If comparison is disallowed how can good be distinguished from bad? If this is the standard I can claim to be the strongest, the wisest, the most hansom, and the most learned man in the world, provided that you do not compare me with anyone else. Actually with this standard I could also claim to be the Messiah and the messenger of God. Isn’t this what you are saying how we should evaluate Islam, with no strings attached?

All those who claim to have brought a message from God fail to give clear and objective proof for their claim and use the same fallacy. Hellen Schucman, the founder of the sect “A Course in Miracles” claimed to have received dictations from Jesus. She has many followers, among them Oprah Winfrey. The "Workbook for Students" is a course written for those who want to learn about this sect. It consists of 365 lessons, an exercise for each day of the year. Their site claims, “This one-year training program begins the process of changing the student's mind and perception." In the introduction to the course it states:

“Some of the ideas the workbook presents you will find hard to believe, and others may seem to be quite startling. This does not matter. You are merely asked to apply the ideas as you are directed to do. You are not asked to judge them at all. You are asked only to use them. It is their use that will give them meaning to you, and will show you that they are true."

By using this method, you do not need to explain anything. People will eventually believe by doing repetitive constant exercises. This is the process through which children are indoctrinated by their parents. Children do not question the validity of the beliefs and practices of their parents. They simply emulate them and eventually those beliefs and customs become part of their own belief system. Schucman demanded that her followers relinquish their rational thinking and submit to her like sheep. A Course in Miracles continues:

“Remember only this; you need not believe the ideas, you need not accept them, and you need not even welcome them. Some of them you may actively resist. None of this will matter, or decrease their efficacy. But do not allow yourself to make exceptions in applying the ideas the workbook contains, and whatever your reactions to the ideas may be, use them. Nothing more than that is required. (Workbook, p. 2).”

Nothing more than that is required? What else is left to require? Once you submit your intelligence and rational thought to someone else and believe uncritically you lose your rational faculty and become a slave of that person, putty in his hand. I already mentioned the story of Abu Bakr who once accepted the irrational claim of Muhammad to be a messenger of God was forced to accept any absurdity that he said, even though at first it shocked him. When people told him that Muhammad had claimed to have flown to Jerusalem in one night, Abu Bakr thought this is a lie. But once he ascertained that Muhamamd did actually say this, he forced himself to believe. When Muhammad asked him to let his 6-year-old child marry him, he at first was shocked, but since he had surrendered his intelligence he had no choice but to accept. Once you submit your intelligence, you become blind and you will do anything. You would murder your own parents and children if asked to. Blind faith reduces man into a brainless zombie. You become bereft of rational thinking and of your humanity.

You say “"The only way of understanding it therefore is to understand it the way it is in an unemotional way, without attaching any strings to the process of your understanding.”

First of all there is a contradiction in this statement. Unemotional thinking is the territory of rational thinking and not of faith. Faith, by its very nature is imbued with emotionalism and irrationality. The very fact that you think your, or anyone’s faith, is unemotional is a fallacy. Faith is an emotional exercise and has nothing to do with rationality. Imam Ghazzali (1058 – 1111) said: “Where the claims of reason come into conflict with revelation, reason must yield to revelation.” A similar thesis in defense of foolishness is presented by Saint Paul in 1 Cor. 1:20-25 where he argues “the foolishness of God is wiser than (the wisdom of) men”. The statement *“Credo quia absurdum”* (I believe because it is absurd), often attributed to Tertullian, is based on this passage of Paul. In DCC 5 he said: “The Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd.” Upon this belief in absurdity fideism is founded and it is the position that has been adopted by Muslims. This fideistic attitude allows the believers to abandon reason and accept whatever Muhammad did, even his blatant crimes, without questioning. Isn't this what you did also? You already confessed that you killed your conscience and accepted things that originally you thought were inhumane and ridiculous, once you accepted Muhammad. You destroyed your humanity through your faith. This is the problem with faith. That is why good people cheefylly commit all sorts of crimes when they are influenced by faith. That is why religion is compared to opium of the masses.

What is amazing is the fact that so many intelligent people act so unintelligently when it comes to religion and adopt fideism instead of rationalism. This is the foundation of all faiths. It amazes me that you describe the process by which you brainwashed yourself and them call it "objective."

Now, you may ask if all faiths are fideistic and irrational why FFI has singled out Islam? Why are we not critical of other faiths? The answer is that our movement is not about fighting against any religion. We believe in freedom of faith. We love to see people have the freedom to believe in anything they choose even if that thing is not our choice. As a matter of fact the editors and pundits of FFI come from all walks of life and religious convictions. We have Christian priests who write for this site. We have Hindus, Jews and people of other faiths

among our pundits. Our objective is not to combat religion but rather make it easy for people to follow any religion they wish. FFI is a common front of people of all faiths and non-faiths who want to protect their freedom by combating totalitarian ideologies of intolerance such as Islam. Islam is uniquely evil. It is an intolerant and fascistic cult. If the majority of people convert to Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism, I still can have the right to not believe and live my life the way I choose. I will lose this freedom if Islam becomes dominant. We can either fight for the “truth” which is subjective and for which there will never be a universal consensus or fight for human rights and freedom of belief. These two concepts are diametrically opposed to each other. We have opted to fight for the latter and leave the choice of faith to each individual. FFI does not promote any ideology except the freedom of faith.

We can’t accept the message of Islam in this day and age because it is an evil message of hate, discrimination and violence. Are you telling me that in future people will have no problem raiding villages and towns with no warning, killing their men, looting their properties and taking their women and children as slaves like Muhammad did? Muhammad assassinated his critics. Are you saying that a time will come when everyone will understand assassination is something good? Muhammad raped women captured in his raids and allowed his followers to do the same. (Q. 4:24) This, to me and to the people of conscience in our time seems horrible. Will it come a day when humanity will finally realize that raping women captured in war is a good thing to do and will have no problem accepting what Muhammad did? The morality of our time says all humans are created equal and must have equal rights irrespective of their faiths. Will in future, people finally come to see that equality is wrong and discrimination against non-Muslims prescribed in the Quran is good? Our newfound morality tells us that women are equal to men and in most civilized countries discrimination against women is not tolerated. Will finally people come to appreciate the superiority of the wisdom of Allah who said women are worth half of men as they are less intelligent and reduce them again to chattels and properties of men? Are you telling me that in the Islamic “universal ideal of morality” everyone will come to grasp the wisdom of beating women as prescribed in the Quran?

You claim that Islam brings universal ideals of morality and then go on to say that I should not judge it in accordance to the standard of morality of our time. Don’t you see there is a contradiction in these two statements? If the message of Islam is universal then it should conform to all times including ours. Islam did not conform even to the morality of 1400 years ago. Read Socrates, Plato, Confucius and Buddha to realize that superior morality existed much before Muhammad was born. Even in Arabia people were far more moral before Islam than Muhammad and his followers. The Arabs had chivalry. They honored sacred months and never shed blood in those months. Muhammad did. The Arabs honored women. They had women generals. Salma and Aisha are two examples. They even had women prophetesses. Sijah was a prophetess contemporary of Muhammad and she had many followers. After Islam women were reduced into chattel. They are deemed to be dirty, deficient in intelligence and faith.

Furthermore we are living in this day and age and we have our own morality and commonsense as yardsticks. I don't know about the future and how people will think. By using the morality of our time I see that Islam is evil. Will in future people think all those evil things that Muhammad did and said were divine? I don't know. I would be surprised if they did but even then it has nothing to do with me. Today I must use our own sense of right and wrong to evaluate the faiths that are presented to me.

Now, you may say that the morality of Islam is superior and that we all must drop our morality and accept what is said in the Quran. That is actually what you did. In that case we must compare the two. What yardstick we have for such comparison? We have our own intelligence and our own sense of fairness widely known as the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule is the infallible measure of right and wrong. The essence of the Golden Rule is "do not do to others what you would not like to be done to you." Using the Golden Rule as our yardstick, we can see that what Muhammad did was evil.

Muhammad himself knew that what he was doing was evil. One day a group of Bedouins stole his camels and killed his shepherd. Muhammad sent men to find them. He then ordered their hands and feet cut and left them under the scorching sun to die a long agonizing death. It is clear that he did not like people stealing his camels and killing his men. However, the irony is that he had stolen those camels himself and had killed their owners. When he came to Medina he was penniless. He raided villages, killed unarmed men and looted their cattle and herds. He did to others what he did not like to be done to him. He broke the Golden Rule.

His followers do the same all the time. They simply have no concept of the Golden Rule. They come to non-Muslim countries, enjoy equal rights and even demand privileges. Build mosques and promote their faith freely. At the same time they deny the basic human rights to non-Muslims in Islamic countries. And they see nothing wrong in this. They think this is the way it should be. Why Muslims, as a lot, lack conscience? It is because they follow Muhammad and he lacked conscience.

Look at yourself! You were a good man. You had conscience before becoming a faithful Muslim. You knew wrong is wrong and did not like discrimination and evil. Once you submitted to Islam, you lost your conscience. Now the thought of sending all non Muslims to hell, killing the apostates, beating wives, stoning adultrers, discriminating against the followers of other faiths, chopping the hand of thief and other savageries prescribed in the Quran do no longer bother you. Even if they do, you try to silence your conscience and accept all these barbarities blindly because you have stopped using your brain and have submitted your intellegence to Muhammad. The irony is that you think what you do is objective.

The problem with Muslims and your good selves is that you commit a major logical fallacy of accepting Islam as true before checking the credentials of its founder. It should be the other way round. Let us first make sure that Muhammad was not a liar and then accept him. You would not accept any belief before convincing yourself that that belief is indeed right and not

the fabrication of a psychopath conman. Then why when it comes to Islam you suddenly do everything in the reverse order? Judge Muhammad and his claim with the same yardstick that you would judge Jim Jones, David Koresh or any claimant and you'll see that he fails miserably.

3) Now I will tell you what my approach was when I started understanding Islam after having spent a few years in the wilderness of faithlessness. You have claimed that there wasn't anything rational about my approach. My question is: How did you learn that? My brief article doesn't mention anything to suggest that. You have used a technical term of Psychology to explain the phenomenon of my conversion. That fact points to another weakness in your approach: You have certain theories of Psychology in your mind which are like nets eager to catch fish and as soon as you fancy a fish fitting into any of your nets, you throw it towards the fish to catch it. I will now tell you, for your benefit, what I went through in my journey towards faith to help you realize that you were emotionally biased when you claimed that my conversion to Islam was an emotional decision.

When I lost my father, I wanted to know the reality of this life. I had either to lead this life with carefree abandon, the way I had been doing before, or I had to become more careful on realizing that life had a purpose. I was gifted with a rare opportunity to not be attracted towards the glamour of this life temporarily at least because of the tragedy I had faced. I was not in a desperate hurry to cling on to some faith. If anything, it was a desperate attempt to find the truth. There is a huge difference between the two approaches. In your enthusiasm to reject my
experience as nonsense you jumped to the former possibility simply because it helped the cause of your theory that Islam is a false religion. Given your present state of mind you had no choice. In the array of nets at your disposal there isn't any at the moment that has been designed to catch the fish of the truthfulness of Islam. So even if the fish comes your way, you wouldn't be able to catch it. In the absence of that net, your involvement in this discussion would remain confined to your efforts to actualize your eagerness that Islam is proved to be a false religion. Such efforts on your part may be a good fish-catching exercise but it can never be an academic approach.

I will tell you why I am saying that my quest, when I was reading the Qur'an then, was by and large an academic one. I divided the passages I came across in the Qur'an into three categories: There were passages that immediately struck me as the most outstanding I had ever come across; there was information in it that I told myself I would never accept; and there were passages about which I had reservations in my mind. While the first category of passages kept me going, the other two were a continuous source of challenge to the possibility that I would accept the book as divine. I ask all your readers to go through the Qur'an with an unbiased approach and they all are going to experience what I experienced. If anyone is claiming that no part of the book, from cover to cover, is making any impact on him/her, he/she is talking nonsense and belying the experiences of millions of intelligent people.

I have no hesitation in saying that the first category of the passages of the Qur'an – the one that struck me as simply brilliant – was the most dominant. It always tended to undermine the other two. However, I managed to keep my wits intact and did not give in until the problems created by the other two were properly sorted out.

The passages that struck me as being out of this world were the ones that invited me to believe in the attributes of mercy, knowledge, wisdom, and providence of God through the evidence of the God-created nature scattered across in abundance both in the outside world and the inside of my soul. On reading those passages which to me form,

even today, the most striking part of the Qur'an, my heart would keep telling me that these couldn't have been authored save by the one who was the designer of my soul as well as the creator of this world. What was remarkable in all these passages was that they didn't have anything wrong even from a scientific point of view. It was only later that I came to learn that many objective readers of the Qur'an, some of who were even non-Muslims, have attested to the fact that the information contained in the Qur'an makes no violation of any of the confirmed principles of established scientific facts. This fact alone is remarkable given that the of Qur'an alludes to numerous phenomena the nature and makes mention of certain facts which had not been discovered anywhere in the world at the time when the book was being revealed.

There were three ideas attributed to the Qur'an about which I had decided that I won't accept them come what may. One of them was the understanding that Muslims were destined to enter the paradise and the non-Muslims were destined to the hell-fire for ever. It sounded so ridiculous to me then and it does so even now that I told myself that I just cannot accept any such suggestion. The other idea attributed to the Qur'an was that it apparently seemed to be suggesting that whoever becomes a non-Muslim after having been a Muslim, he ought to be killed. The third one was the understanding that the Qur'an apparently claims that only God knows what is in the wombs of women when they are pregnant. I could not fool myself by believing that what apparently was mentioned was the truth given that, thanks to the recent advancement in ultrasound-based technology, the gender of the unborn baby could be identified unmistakably. These three serious problems however didn't deter me from continuing to read the Qur'an with an open mind because the merits of the book mentioned above were equally unmistakable and I was in no hurry to jump to any conclusions.

On later investigation it transpired that what I had decided to be unacceptable claims in the Qur'an were never a part of the book. I later realized that what I had initially thought to be Qur'anic concepts were not there in the Qur'an at all. In reaching those conclusions I didn't rely on anyone else's opinion. Nobody else could have mattered when I was in the process of making the decision of my lifetime. It really boosted my confidence in the veracity of the book's claim that it had divine origins. Unlike you, I didn't jump to any hasty decisions nor did I start any malicious propaganda against the faith without understanding what its own
correct version is saying. I continued to give due weight to the merits of the book and its apparent demerits. My persistence was ultimately rewarded.

The category of Qur'anic teachings that created nagging questions in my mind comprised of the sort of objections that were raised by many Western scholars. You too keep mentioning some of those objections. To this category of passages belonged those verses which inform us that the prophet had several wives, that he engaged himself in wars against his enemies, and the fact that his followers expanded the frontiers of the Islamic state forcibly to a vast area of the world.

I will respond to these questions in the fourth part of this (rather long) presentation. At this stage I just want to ask your conscience this question: Was this approach really a blindly emotional one?

The approach I adopted in the process of understanding Islam was to call a spade a spade and a rose a rose. I struggled for months to decide whether the spade of the text

was the real face of it or was it the rose part of it that was real. I could see that it couldn't have been both together. All throughout this struggle, I had one big question in mind: Was God Himself speaking in the Qur'anic text or was I being led to believe so by the man who presented it? You have forced me, and I thank you for doing that, to revisit the moments – I can comfortably say, the most important moments of my life – when I was reading surah al-Ahzab, the thirty-thirty chapter of the Qur'an, which mentions a few details of one of the battles the prophet and his companions were forced to face, the incident that led him to marry one of his cousins, and the general question of plurality of his wives. Until then I was confused about the question whether the Qur'an was God's word. However, after reading that chapter very carefully I decided that it indeed was, and I bowed down my head in submission to God and in gratitude to Him that He had shown me the way. I later realized that the process I had followed was the very process God Almighty had described in the Qur'an: "Allah becomes the protecting friend of those who want to believe; He brings them out of the darkness (of unfaith) to the light (of faith)." It was a process of critical examination of a text with a view to establishing whether its claim to divine origin was correct.

I am glad you wrote this. It shows there is actually not much distance between us. You read the Quran and found some horrible things as well as some passages that in your view were brilliant, out of this world and that you thought they could not have been written by anyone but God. So you decided to believe in it as the word of God and tried to silence your conscience and find justifications for things that you found unconscionable such as killing the apostates, discrimination against non-Muslims, the claim that the unbelievers will all go to hell and other errors such as only God knows about the gender of a child in the womb, etc. Thus you concluded that your approach has been academic, and rational.

Let us analyze this. If the Quran is truly the word of God, could it possibly have any errors in it? Certainly not! So if you find errors, even one error, it shows that this book is not from God. Assuming that there are "brilliant" passages in the Quran as you have supposed, since God is presumably perfect he can't err. So you have two choices, either reject the Quran in its entirety or accept it in its entirety. I chose the first route and you the second. Now let us see who made the right choice.

The problem with your approach is that now you have to go against your own conscience and do the things that you abhor such as killing apostates, beating wives, discriminating against non-Muslims, stoning adulterers, etc. You may not like to do these things yourself, but since you already accepted Islam as the message of God you can't oppose those who do such things. You may follow your conscience and do not do evil personally but you have become part of the machinery that does that.

Does this reduce your culpability? I don't think so. The Nazis committed many crimes against humanity. They did things that were unthinkable. Not all the Germans liked that. Germans are no more violent than any other nation. Those who did such things were a small minority. However, they could commit all those atrocities because they had the backing of the masses of the peaceful Germans. Could Hitler come to power if he was not supported by

the masses of the people? He was voted into office by the majority of Germans. They loved him and believed in him. The average Germans did not commit any crime. However, they supported those who did. Can we say they were innocent? Of course not! They were guilty as hell and they know it. They carry the burden of that guilt up to this day.

Likewise, when Muslims follow the Quran and do those barbarities that you don't like you are guilty too. Wherever there is a blood of an innocent person shed, even half a world away, in the name of Islam, part of that blood stains your hands and the hands of every Muslim. Any person who supports Islam is guilty of all the crimes committed in the name of Islam.

In an army, not everyone carries a gun to kill; there are hosts of other people who help with the logistics of that army. Actually the entire country is in war because everyone finances the war with his tax money. Now, if my country goes in an unjust war, I may have little control over it because the governments often don't listen to ordinary people. So I have no choice. However, one can leave Islam. This is a belief and not citizenship. All one has to do is stop going to the mosque, paying to Islamic "charities" that we all know is spent to spread Islam and not help anyone out of humanity and compassion and withdraw from Islamic activities. By accepting Islam as a true religion, you automatically become part of the same army of hate that is killing people everywhere and whether you agree with the terrorists or not you are now part of them. In this case you are guilty because you have a choice and you choose to belong to this terrorist cult and follow a terrorist false prophet. "Moderate Muslim" makes as much sense as moderate Nazi, or moderate gangster. What does moderate Muslim mean? Does it mean that you moderately hate non-Muslims, moderately kill the apostates, moderately despise women and moderately beat them? Moderate Muslim is an oxymoron. You are either a Muslim and therefore a terrorist and/or terrorist sympathizer, supporter, ally, whether knowingly or unknowingly, or you are not a Muslim.

Now, let us get to the REAL question. Is there anything in the Quran that is out of this world? Absolutely not! I am offering $50,000 US dollars to anyone who can show me one example of a thing that is out of this world in the Quran. We have talked a lot. It seems that you are not willing to go forward. We are stuck in the first 3 questions. I see you have not even responded to my question number 4. There are hundreds of errors in the Quran and I would like to show you at least a few of them. However, I think it is time to get to the crux of the matter. Since you don't seem to be willing to go forward, I challenge you to show me one passage in the Quran that is out of this world as you say and I will not only remove faithfreedom.org, I will also give you the reward. I have heard all those claims and along with other pundits of FFI have debunked them all. All those claims about science in the Quran are nothing but wishful thinking of believers and are ludicrous. Unfortunately you have no access to our site. You can't read many articles that we wrote showing how all those claims made about the Quran being scientific are bogus and nonsense. The person who is good in spreading this charade is Dr. Zakir Naik. I have refuted each and every one of his claims. Here is the link. http://www.faithfreedom.org/debates/NaikCampbellintro.htmIf you wish I can email it to you. Otherwise let us start all over again and send me what you think are the Quranic passages that are out of this world and let us see if they really are.

I will answer to your point number 4 in another occasion. Your response had only 4 points not 5 as you stated in the beginning.

Kind regards

Ali Sina